

Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5877
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

UNCLAS BANGKOK 16309

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: PROMOTING EFFORTS TO RESCUE SEA REFUGEES

1. WE HAVE BELATEDLY RECEIVED AN ARTICLE FROM VOLUME 18, NUMBER 3, SUMMER 1977 OF THE HARVARD INTERNATIONAL LAW JOURNAL. THE ARTICLE IS TITLED "THE DILEMMA OF THE SEA REFUGEE: RESCUE WITHOUT REFUGE." PAGES 602 AND 603 OF THE JOURNAL SURFACE AN IDEA THAT HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY OCCURRED TO US. ON THE PERHAPS MISTAKEN PRESUMPTION THAT THE BUREAU OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS IS AS UNLIKELY A READER OF THE HARVARD INTERNATIONAL LAW JOURNAL AS EMBASSY BANGKOK, WE WOULD LIKE TO ECHO THE IDEA.

2. THE ARTICLE DEALS EXTENSIVELY WITH THE DIFFICULTIES THAT A SHIP CAPTAIN HAS IN FINDING SUITABLE REFUGE, AND SOMETIMES ANY REFUGE, FOR THOSE THAT HE PICKS UP IN DISTRESS AT SEA. JAMES Z. PUGASH, THE AUTHOR OF THE ARTICLE, SUGGESTS THE CREATION OF A FUND FOR REIMBURSING SHIP OWNERS AND THEIR CREWS FOR THE EXPENSES THEY INCUR IN RESCUING SEA ESCAPEES AND BRINGING THEM TO A PORT THAT WILL ACCEPT THEM. THE ARTICLE CONTINUES TO STATE "IF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER WERE TO COMPENSATE SHIPS FOR THEIR RESCUE EFFORTS, THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE LIFE SAVING EFFORTS WOULD INCREASE. ALTHOUGH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER DOES NOT PRESENTLY PROVIDE SUCH REMUNERATION, HE DOES HAVE FUNDS AT HIS DISPOSAL WHICH COULD

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BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE."

3. WE RECOGNIZE THAT WASHINGTON MAY HAVE ALREADY SEIZED ON THIS IDEA, BUT ARE PROFFERING IT SECOND-HAND IN CASE IT HAS NOT YET BEEN MULLED OVER.

WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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